



IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
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October 7, 2014

Dear School Administrator:

We are at a crossroads in charting a course for Idaho's future. Not surprisingly, the discussion and decisions revolve around education and whether we choose to make fundamental changes to the system or maintain the status quo. I think most of us can agree that the status quo will not create the opportunities for our children that we all desire.

The Governor's Task Force for Improving Education identified 20 areas for improvement. Key among those were helping districts recruit and retain high quality teachers and providing greater fiscal stability. The recommendation to develop a tiered system of certification and a career ladder for teacher compensation were recommended to achieve these goals. Those recommendations were unanimously supported by the Task Force.

Since then, a group of education stakeholders, including several representatives for school administrators, has spent nearly two years developing recommendations based on their collective experience, input from their peers, and best practices. Their study and discussion has resulted in a recommendation to pursue additional funding for teacher salaries along with a framework of accountability. The administrators who helped develop these recommendations supported them unanimously.

We know that student success is heavily dependent on high quality teachers. The tiered certification framework that goes hand-in-hand with the career ladder compensation model is designed to recruit and retain highly effective teachers. Getting additional funding to districts for salaries will help all districts in addressing one of the main causes of fiscal uncertainty.

While the career ladder compensation model has considerable support among stakeholders, the tiered certification framework is raising many questions and concerns. This is good. It means people are paying attention, which is exactly what we need.

The proposed administrative rule on tiered certification is proceeding through a process of public input, which provides all stakeholders with an opportunity to help modify and refine what goes forward to the legislature. However, once the rule is passed, there will continue to be opportunities to improve the framework. To that end, I intend to establish a tiered certification review committee to assess how the new framework is being implemented so that needed changes can be made as lessons are learned.

The Board is committed to seeing that meaningful change and additional support for education are achieved in ways that work for school administrators, teachers, students and parents. We recognize the momentum created by the Task Force and the broad support of the 20 recommendations. It is essential that we capitalize on that momentum and not squander what we believe is the best chance we have to address essential needs for Idaho schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emma L. Atchley".

Emma Atchley, President